

We claim:

1. A process for cleaning tray columns which have been used for
5 rectificatively treating liquids comprising (meth)acrylic
acid and/or esters thereof by conveying a basic liquid
downward through the tray column, which comprises passing a
gas through the tray column in countercurrent to the basic
10 liquid in such a manner that, during the cleaning, the
difference between the pressure in the gas phase immediately
below the lowermost tray of the tray column and the pressure
in the gas phase immediately above the uppermost tray of the
tray column divided by the number of trays in the column is
at least 0.5 mbar per tray.
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2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, during the
cleaning, the difference between the pressure in the gas
phase immediately above the uppermost tray of the tray column
and the pressure in the gas phase immediately below the
20 lowermost tray of the tray column divided by the number of
trays in the column is from 1 to 5 mbar.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, during the
cleaning, the difference between the pressure in the gas
25 phase immediately above the uppermost tray of the tray column
and the pressure in the gas phase immediately below the
lowermost tray of the tray column divided by the number of
trays in the column is from 2 to 4 mbar.
- 30 4. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the
basic liquid used is an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide.
5. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the gas
35 passed through the tray column in countercurrent to the basic
liquid is air.

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